

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA
USCINCSO PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 02618

FROM AMBASSADOR YOUNG TO AMBASSADOR POPPER

AMEMBASSY PASS TO GOV PANCANAL

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PN, GDS
SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTATION OF PANAMA CANAL TREATIES

1. REFLECTING UPON THE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF
PRESIDENT CARTER TO PANAMA, AND THE U.S.-PANAMA
RELATIONSHIP, I AM IMPRESSED BY THE IMPORTANCE THAT OUR
INITIAL DECISIONS AND ACTIONS IN IMPLEMENTING THE NEW
TREATIES WILL HAVE IN SETTING THE PATTERN FOR COOPERATION
IN OPERATING THE CANAL AND FOR U.S-PANAMA RELATIONS FOR
THE NEXT 20 YEARS. OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH PANAMANIAN
REVEALED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN THAT THE NEW RELATIONSHIP
BE BASED UPON CONSULTATION AND AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE
INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATIES.
BECAUSE OF EXPERIENCE WITH WHAT THEY CONSIDERED WERE
UNILATERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 1903 TREATY BY THE US,
THE PANAMANIAN WILL BE SENSITIVE --PERHAPS OVERLY SO--
TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SAME PATTERN WILL BE
REPEATED WITH THE PRESENT TREATIES.

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2. GENERAL TORRIJOS, IN HIS CINCO DE MAYO PLAZA SPEECH
REFERRED TO POTENTIAL PROBLEMS IN THE FUTURE AND OTHER
PANAMANIAN ALSO MENTIONED IN PRIVATE THE NEED FOR CLOSE
CONSULTATION. WE ARE NOW RIDING ON A CUSHION OF CON-
FIDENCE AND GOOD WILL WHICH WAS ESTABLISHED BY BOTH
SIDES' NEGOTIATORS AND POLITICAL LEADERS DURING THE
TREATY MAKING AND RATIFICATION PROCESS. WE SHOULD SEEK

TO BUILD AND CAPITALIZE ON THIS DURING THE COMING MONTHS AS WE PLAN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATIES. ONLY BY CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH THE PANAMANIAN CAN WE ENSURE THAT WE RETAIN THEIR COOPERATION AT A HIGH LEVEL. IN FACT, WE SHOULD KEEP THEM INFORMED OF THE PLANNING FOR TREATY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS WHICH WILL NOT NECESSARILY DIRECTLY AFFECT PANAMA. IT WILL BE IN OUR INTEREST TO MAINTAIN THEIR FULL COOPERATION.

3. WE MIGHT CONSIDER DRAWING PROMINENT NON-GOVERNMENT PANAMANIAN INTO THE CONSULTATIONS. PEOPLE SUCH AS ARCHBISHOP MARCOS MCGRATH COME TO MIND IN THIS CONNECTION. ALSO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRINCIPAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR COULD BE HELPFUL IN BUILDING PANAMANIAN UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. BY DEVELOPING PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING WE SHOULD HELP CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT LEADERS CAN COOPERATE WITH US.

4. I AM AWARE THAT YOU AND OTHER U.S. OFFICIALS ARE CONSIDERING THESE PROBLEMS AND MAY ALREADY BE DEVELOPING PLANS FOR TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. I SIMPLY WANT TO ADD MY VOICE TO THOSE URGING THAT WE GIVE HIGH PRIORITY ATTENTION TO THE NEED FOR SENSITIVITY IN CARRYING OUT OUR CONSULTATIONS WITH PANAMA ON TREATY IMPLEMENTATION. SHOULD THE RELATIONSHIP GO SOUR, FOR WHATEVER REASON, CONFIDENTIAL

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OUR DIFFICULTIES WOULD BE COMPOUNDED. LEONARD

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